Defending nature must become leading priority for humanity; Nature Saskatchewan heads to Ottawa soon to press for even more action

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Body

For many, nature provides recreation, relaxation and adventure. It is easy to love nature when you fill your bird feeders or go for a summer walk, but it is harder to protect nature and to speak up for nature.

This is the place where we find ourselves now. Nature Saskatchewan has always encouraged locals to get outside and discover the wonders of the natural world.

Unfortunately, nature is in trouble. It's not enough to just be a nature lover anymore - if we want to save it, we must be nature defenders, too.

A landmark UN report in May concluded that one million species worldwide are at risk of extinction.

In September, a study published in Science estimated one in four birds in North America has disappeared over the past four decades, which amounts to three billion missing birds. Grassland birds are some of the fastest disappearing.

The No. 1 cause of population declines in vulnerable species is habitat loss.

It's all evidence that as human beings, we've taken too much. We haven't left enough room for nature.

The issue is even more important in Saskatchewan, because while we may not get the same attention as the rainforest or the ice caps, the prairie region is one of the most endangered landscapes in the world.

Unless we change our course, it will have real consequences for us and wildlife.

Fortunately, we know the solution and we are on the path to change.

In 2011 Canada agreed to protect 17 per cent of land and freshwater and 10 per cent of oceans by 2020 as part of an international pact to conserve nature.

So far, the Canadian government has exceeded the ocean target and is approaching the land target.

After the election, the government committed to embracing new targets: 25 per cent by 2025 and 30 per cent in 2030.

Meeting that target would be the biggest shift in the history of Canadian conservation. It won't happen without ordinary people, in every town and city across the country, demanding action.

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That's why delegates from Nature Saskatchewan are going to Ottawa on Feb. 4 to meet with our MPs. We are joining more than 40 other nature groups from across the country in the capital to ensure change from those who represent us.

Nature is our home and we share it with many, many other creatures. Each species has its role to play and each role is of great importance.

For an ecosystem to work properly, many pieces must work together and this is why coming together in Ottawa on Feb. 4 is so important.

We will continue to work together to call for increased protected places in Canada.

We're losing species around the globe, but we're losing them close to home, too.

From sharp-tailed grouse to prairie dogs, our province is full of incredible birds and animals that need our help.

Politicians don't speak in bison bellows or bird song.

We'll need to translate. We must stand together, as nature lovers and nature defenders, and ask the government to make room for nature. Nature Saskatchewan is a charitable conservation and cultural organization of naturalists dedicated to protecting and promoting nature, its diversity, and the processes that sustain it.Our supporters include approximately 700 individual members and 15 local naturalist groups. Our vision is "Humanity in Harmony with Nature." !@COPYRIGHT=© 2020 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

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